
SENATE BILL 6481

State of Washington

64th Legislature

2016 Regular Session

By Senators Jayapal, Frockt, Baumgartner, Miloscia, Lias, Rolfes, Nelson, Darneille, Conway, Chase, Dansel, Mullet, Keiser, Pedersen, Habib, Takko, McAuliffe, Fraser, Billig, Hasegawa, and Ranker

Read first time 01/21/16. Referred to Committee on Higher Education.

1 AN ACT Relating to establishing the Washington promise program,
2 which provides for universal and affordable access to community and
3 technical colleges; amending RCW 43.88C.010; adding a new chapter to
4 Title 28B RCW; and providing an effective date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The Washington promise program is
7 established to help make the first two years of college affordable
8 and accessible to all citizens of the state of Washington by offering
9 a tuition waiver for eligible students enrolled in associate degree
10 or certificate programs offered by Washington's community and
11 technical colleges. The purpose of the program is to encourage more
12 Washington residents who have not yet earned a bachelor's degree or
13 higher degree to enroll in and successfully complete an associate's
14 degree or certificate that will lead to opportunities for further
15 education and jobs. By making a higher education credential more
16 affordable and accessible, Washington will make more progress towards
17 attaining the Washington student achievement council roadmap goal of
18 having at least seventy percent of Washington adults having a
19 postsecondary credential by 2023.

1 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** The definitions in this section apply
2 throughout this chapter unless the context clearly requires
3 otherwise.

4 (1) "Board" means the state board for community and technical
5 colleges.

6 (2) "Community or technical colleges" means the community or
7 technical colleges governed under chapter 28B.50 RCW.

8 (3) "Gift aid" means financial aid received from the federal Pell
9 grant, the state need grant program under chapter 28B.92 RCW, the
10 college bound scholarship program under chapter 28B.118 RCW, the
11 opportunity grant program under chapter 28B.50 RCW, the opportunity
12 scholarship program under chapter 28B.145 RCW, or any other state
13 grant or scholarship program that provides funds for educational
14 purposes with no obligation of repayment. Student loans and work
15 study programs are not included.

16 (4) "Office" means the office of student financial assistance.

17 (5) "Program" means the Washington promise program.

18 (6) "Resident student" means a student who is a resident student
19 as defined in RCW 28B.15.012.

20 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 3.** (1) The office shall administer the
21 Washington promise program for resident students seeking an
22 associate's degree or certificate from a community or technical
23 college under the terms and conditions in this section.

24 (2) To be eligible for the program, a resident student who has
25 not previously earned at least a bachelor's degree must be admitted
26 to an eligible degree or certificate program as provided in
27 subsection (6) of this section at a community or technical college,
28 regardless of the student's age.

29 (3) Students must complete the free application for federal
30 student aid or the Washington application for state financial aid
31 each academic year in which they seek eligibility for the program.

32 (4) To remain eligible for the program, once a student has earned
33 forty-five credits, the student must maintain a cumulative grade
34 point average of 2.0.

35 (5) A student may be eligible for the program until one of the
36 following events occurs:

37 (a) The student has earned an associate degree or credential
38 under this chapter;

39 (b) The student has earned one hundred twenty credits; or

1 (c) Four calendar years have passed since the student first began
2 receiving benefits under this chapter.

3 (6) An eligible degree or certificate program is limited to:

4 (a) An associate degree;

5 (b) Academic programs with credits that can fully transfer via
6 articulation agreement toward a baccalaureate degree or
7 postbaccalaureate degree at an institution of higher education; or

8 (c) Professional and technical programs that lead to a recognized
9 postsecondary credential.

10 (7)(a) The office shall award grants to students who meet
11 criteria in (b) of this subsection for an amount up to the cost of
12 tuition and fees as defined in RCW 28B.15.020, services and
13 activities fees as defined in RCW 28B.15.041, and a cost of
14 attendance stipend less all other gift aid. The calculation in this
15 subsection (7)(a) shall not result in the reduction of gift aid.

16 (b) Up to one thousand five hundred dollars for books and other
17 related higher education expenses must be provided as a stipend to
18 students with a family income that does not exceed seventy percent of
19 the state median family income. If a student eligible for the stipend
20 under this subsection (7)(b) is enrolled less than full time, the
21 student must receive a prorated portion of the stipend based on the
22 number of credits in which the student is enrolled.

23 (8) By December 1, 2016, and annually by December 1st thereafter,
24 the board shall report to the appropriate policy and fiscal
25 committees of the legislature on the following impacts of the
26 program:

27 (a) Student enrollment in the eligible degree or certificate
28 programs defined in subsection (6) of this section;

29 (b) Student completion rates of credits, certificates, and
30 degrees;

31 (c) The cost of implementation, including the cost per student;

32 (d) Additional resources used to meet student needs, such as
33 counseling, precollege courses, child care, or transportation; and

34 (e) The number of students receiving wraparound services, the
35 number of schools providing wraparound services, and the resources
36 needed to provide wraparound services.

37 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 4.** The board, as well as individual community
38 and technical colleges, are authorized to provide retention and
39 completion programs, including financial support, academic guidance,

1 and services that assist students in developing successful habits,
2 designed to help students earn a degree or credential. Services may
3 include, but are not limited to: (1) Wraparound services to support
4 the well-being of students in the program who experience emotional or
5 behavioral disturbances, and (2) a quarter-long student success
6 course during, or before, their first enrollment period, that teaches
7 essential skills for college success, study habits, and time
8 management, provides financial aid information and resources,
9 connects students with advisors, encourages student mentoring, helps
10 establish student cohorts, and provides information about services
11 available on campus.

12 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 5.** The Washington state institute for public
13 policy shall conduct a study on the effectiveness of the program,
14 including but not limited to: Any increase in enrollments in
15 community or technical colleges; any decreases in enrollments
16 elsewhere in institutions of higher education; changes in student
17 persistence, completion, and time-to-degree rates in eligible degree
18 or certificate programs; and any change in need or delivery of
19 student services. The analysis shall include the fiscal impact of the
20 program on the students, community and technical colleges, and state.
21 The institute shall report its findings to the relevant committees of
22 the legislature by December 1, 2020.

23 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 6.** The caseload forecast council shall
24 estimate the anticipated caseload of the program and submit this
25 forecast as required in RCW 43.88C.020.

26 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 7.** The board may adopt rules to implement
27 this chapter.

28 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 8.** This act may be known and cited as the
29 Washington promise program.

30 **Sec. 9.** RCW 43.88C.010 and 2015 c 128 s 2 are each amended to
31 read as follows:

32 (1) The caseload forecast council is hereby created. The council
33 shall consist of two individuals appointed by the governor and four
34 individuals, one of whom is appointed by the chairperson of each of
35 the two largest political caucuses in the senate and house of

1 representatives. The chair of the council shall be selected from
2 among the four caucus appointees. The council may select such other
3 officers as the members deem necessary.

4 (2) The council shall employ a caseload forecast supervisor to
5 supervise the preparation of all caseload forecasts. As used in this
6 chapter, "supervisor" means the caseload forecast supervisor.

7 (3) Approval by an affirmative vote of at least five members of
8 the council is required for any decisions regarding employment of the
9 supervisor. Employment of the supervisor shall terminate after each
10 term of three years. At the end of the first year of each three-year
11 term the council shall consider extension of the supervisor's term by
12 one year. The council may fix the compensation of the supervisor. The
13 supervisor shall employ staff sufficient to accomplish the purposes
14 of this section.

15 (4) The caseload forecast council shall oversee the preparation
16 of and approve, by an affirmative vote of at least four members, the
17 official state caseload forecasts prepared under RCW 43.88C.020. If
18 the council is unable to approve a forecast before a date required in
19 RCW 43.88C.020, the supervisor shall submit the forecast without
20 approval and the forecast shall have the same effect as if approved
21 by the council.

22 (5) A councilmember who does not cast an affirmative vote for
23 approval of the official caseload forecast may request, and the
24 supervisor shall provide, an alternative forecast based on
25 assumptions specified by the member.

26 (6) Members of the caseload forecast council shall serve without
27 additional compensation but shall be reimbursed for travel expenses
28 in accordance with RCW 44.04.120 while attending sessions of the
29 council or on official business authorized by the council.
30 Nonlegislative members of the council shall be reimbursed for travel
31 expenses in accordance with RCW 43.03.050 and 43.03.060.

32 (7) "Caseload," as used in this chapter, means:

33 (a) The number of persons expected to meet entitlement
34 requirements and require the services of public assistance programs,
35 state correctional institutions, state correctional noninstitutional
36 supervision, state institutions for juvenile offenders, the common
37 school system, long-term care, medical assistance, foster care, and
38 adoption support;

1 (b) The number of students who are eligible for the Washington
2 college bound scholarship program and are expected to attend an
3 institution of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.92.030;

4 (c) The number of students who are eligible for the Washington
5 promise program and are expected to attend a community or technical
6 college as defined in section 2 of this act;

7 (d) The number of children who are eligible, as defined in RCW
8 43.215.405, to participate in, and the number of children actually
9 served by, the early childhood education and assistance program.

10 (8) The caseload forecast council shall forecast the temporary
11 assistance for needy families and the working connections child care
12 programs as a courtesy.

13 (9) The caseload forecast council shall forecast youth
14 participating in the extended foster care program pursuant to RCW
15 74.13.031 separately from other children who are residing in foster
16 care and who are under eighteen years of age.

17 (10) Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the
18 definitions provided in RCW 43.88.020 apply to this chapter.

19 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 10.** Sections 1 through 8 and 11 of this act
20 constitute a new chapter in Title 28B RCW.

21 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 11.** This act takes effect July 1, 2016.

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